Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A vehicle component comprising a biodegradable material, said biodegradable material formed as at least one of a fiber, a continuous matrix, a filler, or a cellular material,

the fiber, the continuous matrix, the filler, or the cell material consisting essentially of a polyhydroxyalkanoate resin, the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin being a homo-polymer or copolymer of hydroxyalkanoate monomer units selected from the group consisting of 3-hydroxybutyrate, 3-hydroxyvalerate, 3-hydroxyoctanoate, 4-hydroxybutyrate, 5 5-hydroxyvalerate, 5-hydroxycaproate, 6-hydroxycaproate, 6-hydroxycaprylate, and 6-hydroxypropionate.

Claim 2 is cancelled.

Claim 3. (Original) The vehicle component of claim 1 wherein the vehicle component is made from a composite, the composite comprising a continuous matrix of the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin reinforced with a biodegradable fiber.

Claim 4. (Original) The vehicle occupant component of claim 3 wherein the biodegradable fiber comprises a continuous fiber or a discontinuous fiber.

Claim 5. (Original) The vehicle component of claim 3 wherein the biodegradable fiber comprises one of a plurality of continuous fibers and the continuous fibers are woven together.

Claim 6. (Original) The vehicle component of claim 3 wherein the biodegradable fiber comprises one of a plurality of discontinuous fibers and the discontinuous fibers are bonded together to form a web.

Claim 7. (Original) The vehicle component of claim 3 wherein the biodegradable fiber is a natural fiber or synthetic fiber.

Claim 8. (Original) The vehicle component of claim 3 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin is a poly(3-hydroxybutyrate).

Claim 9. (Original) The vehicle component of claim 3 wherein the biodegradable fiber is cotton.

Claim 10. (Previously presented) The vehicle component of claim 1 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin is formed as polyhydroxyalkanoate fibers.

Claim 11. (Original) The vehicle component of claim 10 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate fibers are woven or bonded together to form a biodegradable fabric.

Claim 12. (Previously presented) The vehicle component of claim 10 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin is selected from group consisting of poly(3-hydroxybutyrate-co-3-hydroxyvalerate) and polyhydroxyoctanoate.

Claim 13. (Original) The vehicle component of claim 1 wherein the biodegradable material is a biodegradable cellular material.

Claim 14. (Previously presented) The vehicle component of claim 1 wherein the biodegradable material comprises a filler material.

Claim 15. (Original) The vehicle component of claim 14 wherein the filler material imparts sound deadening properties to the biodegradable material.

Claim 16. (Original) The vehicle component of claim 14 wherein the filler material is a naturally occurring mineral.

Claim 17. (Currently amended) A vehicle occupant protection apparatus comprising:

a reaction canister; and

an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device contained in the reaction canister;

wherein at least one of the reaction canister and the inflatable vehicle occupant protection device is biodegradable and comprises a biodegradable material, the biodegradable material formed as at least one of a fiber, a continuous matrix, a filler, or a cellular material,

the fiber, the continuous matrix, the filler, or the cell material consisting essentially of a polyhydroxyalkanoate resin, the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin being a homo-polymer or copolymer of hydroxyalkanoate monomer units selected from the group consisting of 3-hydroxybutyrate, 3-hydroxyvalerate, 3-hydroxyoctanoate, 4-hydroxybutyrate, 5 5-hydroxyvalerate, 5-hydroxycaproate, 6-hydroxycaproate, 6-hydroxycaprylate, and 6-hydroxypropionate.

Claim 18 is cancelled.

Claim 19. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 17 wherein the reaction canister is biodegradable and comprises a polyhydroxyalkanoate resin.

Claim 20. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 19 wherein the reaction canister is made from a composite, the composite comprising a continuous matrix of the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin reinforced with a biodegradable fiber.

Claim 21. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 20 wherein the biodegradable fiber comprises a continuous fiber or a discontinuous fiber.

Claim 22. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 20 wherein the biodegradable fiber comprises one of a plurality of continuous fibers and the continuous fibers are woven together.

Claim 23. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 20 wherein the biodegradable fiber comprises one of a plurality of discontinuous fibers and the discontinuous fibers are bonded together to form a web.

Claim 24. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 20 wherein the biodegradable fiber is a natural fiber or synthetic fiber.

Claim 25. (Original) The vehicle occupant apparatus of claim 20 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin is a poly(3-hydroxybutyrate).

Claim 26. (Original) The vehicle occupant apparatus of claim 25 wherein the biodegradable fiber is cotton.

Claim 27.(Original) The vehicle occupant apparatus of claim 17 wherein the air bag is biodegradable and comprises polyhydroxyalkanoate resin.

Claim 28. (Previously presented) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 27 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin is formed as polyhydroxyalkanoate fibers.

Claim 29. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 28 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate fibers are woven or bonded together to form a biodegradable fabric.

Claim 30. (Original) The vehicle occupant apparatus of claim 29 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin is poly(3-hydroxybutyrate-co-3-hydroxyvalerate).

Claim 31. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 29 wherein the biodegradable fabric has a Mullen burst strength of at least about 1500 psi and an elastic modulus of about 10,000 psi to about 400,000 psi.

Claim 32. (Currently amended) A vehicle occupant protection apparatus comprising a reaction canister wherein the reaction canister is biodegradable and comprises a biodegradable material, the biodegradable material formed as at least one of a fiber, a continuous matrix, a filler, or a cellular material,

the fiber, the continuous matrix, the filler, or the cell material consisting essentially of a polyhydroxyalkanoate resin, the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin being a homo-polymer or copolymer of hydroxyalkanoate monomer units selected from the group consisting of 3-hydroxybutyrate, 3-hydroxyvalerate, 3-hydroxyoctanoate, 4-

hydroxybutyrate, 5 5-hydroxyvalerate, 5-hydroxycaproate, 6-hydroxycaproate, 6-hydroxycaprylate, and 6-hydroxypropionate.

Claim 33 is cancelled.

Claim 34. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 32 wherein the reaction canister further comprises a biodegradable fiber that reinforces the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin.

Claim 35. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 32 wherein the reaction canister is made from a composite, the composite comprising a continuous matrix of the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin reinforced with a biodegradable fiber.

Claim 36. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 34 wherein the biodegradable fiber comprises a continuous fiber or a discontinuous fiber.

Claim 37. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 36 wherein the biodegradable fiber is one of a plurality of continuous fibers and the continuous fibers are woven together.

Claim 38. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 36 wherein the biodegradable fiber is one of a plurality of discontinuous fibers and the discontinuous fibers are bonded together to form a web.

Claim 39. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 34 wherein the biodegradable fiber is a natural fiber or a synthetic fiber.

Claim 40. (Original) The vehicle occupant apparatus of claim 34 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin is a poly(3-hydroxybutyrate).

Claim 41. (Original) The vehicle occupant apparatus of claim 40 wherein the biodegradable fiber is cotton.

Claim 42. (Currently amended) A vehicle occupant protection apparatus comprising a vehicle occupant protection device wherein the vehicle occupant protection device is biodegradable and a biodegradable material, the biodegradable material formed as at least one of a fiber, a continuous matrix, a filler, or a cellular material,

the fiber, the continuous matrix, the filler, or the cell material consisting essentially of a polyhydroxyalkanoate resin, the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin being a homo-polymer or copolymer of hydroxyalkanoate monomer units selected from the group consisting of 3-hydroxybutyrate, 3-hydroxyvalerate, 3-hydroxyoctanoate, 4-hydroxybutyrate, 5 5-hydroxyvalerate, 5-hydroxycaproate, 6-hydroxycaproate, 6-hydroxycaprylate, and 6-hydroxypropionate..

Claim 43. (Previously presented) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 42 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin is formed as polyhydroxyalkanoate fibers.

Claim 44. (Original) The vehicle occupant apparatus of claim 43 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate fibers are woven or bonded together to form a biodegradable fabric.

Claim 45. (Original) The vehicle occupant apparatus of claim 43 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate resin is poly(3-hydroxybutyrate-co-3-hydroxyvalerate).

Claim 46. (Original) The vehicle occupant protection apparatus of claim 43 wherein the biodegradable fabric has a Mullen burst strength of at least about 1500 psi and an elastic modulus of about 10,000 psi to about 400,000 psi.